

Welcoming the Other

The 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace*
22 November 2013



The 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* Closes in Celebration

The 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* completed its final session in a celebration, as religious leaders took the stage to affirm the work and witness of *Religions for Peace*. The Closing Session of the Assembly reflected the Assembly's theme, "Welcoming the Other," and the ways in which the recommendations made by Assembly delegates on how to "Welcome the Other," will guide future actions.

The Closing Session gave attendees an opportunity to celebrate their colleagues' work and achievements during the Assembly. Key speakers included H.E. Sheikh Shaban Mubajje, Grand Mufti of Uganda Muslim Supreme Council and Co-Moderator of African Council of Religious Leaders—*RfP*; Dharma Master Most Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw of Myanmar; His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch; and H.E. Mr. Faisal bin Adulrahman bin Muaammar, Secretary General of the KAICIID Dialogue Center.

"We believe that religious leaders must move beyond mere tolerance to love," said His All Holiness Bartholomew I. "When we embrace and welcome 'the other' with genuine concern and love—as if 'the other' is our very own neighbor and our very self—then we have the foundation for creating lasting peace in the world."

KAICIID Secretary General Muammar declared, "We are going to knock on every door—looking for peace, looking for co-existence, looking for love."

A Historic Demonstration of Unity

In a moving demonstration of the power of religious communities to welcome the other, religious leaders from both North and South Korea took the stage together at the Closing Session of the World Assembly. To emotional and extended applause, they joined hands, bowed, and asked the assembled *Religions for Peace* family to pray and work for peace on the Korean peninsula.

Jan Jen Won, President of the Korean Council of Religionists (North Korea), "Although Korea is divided by north and south, in our religious communities we are not divided. We are performing reunification."

Archbishop Hyginus Kim Hee-joong, President of the Korean Conference of *Religions for Peace*, said, "We will do our best to continue our work to bring peace to all of Korea...Peace in Korea will surely bring peace to the world."

Assembly Unanimously Calls for Release of Syrian Bishops

More than 600 religious leaders at the 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace* unanimously appealed for the release of two abducted Syrian bishops. Throughout the 9th World Assembly of *Religions for Peace*, delegates from different faiths around the world have sent prayers to and expressed concern for those who are suffering in Syria. On the floor of the Assembly, delegates unanimously affirmed the appeal for the release of Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim and Bishop Yazigi.

"Dear Bishops, you are symbol for all Syrians of the hunger, the thirst for peace by all Syrians. So you who are holding the bishops, you are brothers to us and so we ask you, as our brothers, to let these bishops go," said Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*. "This is what the Muslim and Christian leaders of Syria have asked for. Please let them go."



Vienna Declaration: “Welcoming the Other”



Global religious leaders committed today to work together to resist rising hostility toward the “other” in their declaration: “Welcoming the Other — A Multi-Religious Vision of Peace” The Assembly adopted the declaration today, which presents a framework for action going forward.

“All faith traditions make clear that it is a religious imperative to welcome the other,” said Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*. “This commitment can guide multi-religious action for peace, the antidote to the rising tide of hostility.”

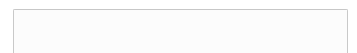
To read the Vienna Declaration, click [here](#).

Special Session on Responsibility to Protect

Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary General and Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect addressed the Assembly about the vital role of religious leaders in preventing conflict.

“The equal respect for all mankind allows us to recognize our differences and ‘welcome the other,’” said Mr. Dieng. “It is essential for religious leaders to ‘welcome the other’ to prevent conflict and mass atrocity crimes.”

Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*, affirmed the *Religions for Peace* network's commitment to support the work of Mr. Dieng, both by participating in important forums for change and in doing work on the ground to prevent conflict.



Following the 9th World Assembly of Religions for Peace

Although the Assembly has concluded, we encourage you continue to follow us on social media to hear the latest news about the Assembly. To view documents from the Assembly, please view the 9th World Assembly's [resources](#) located on the *Religions for Peace* [website](#).

Also, please follow us on social media to join the conversation about the Assembly:

- Follow [The 9th World Assembly of Religions for Peace](#) Facebook page. Please use the Assembly's official hashtag **#RfPAssembly** if you are posting your own updates.
- Join us on [Twitter](#) and post your thoughts on the Assembly using **#RfPAssembly**.
- Follow us on [Instagram](#) at **rfp_assembly** and post your own photos using the tag **#RfPAssembly**.
- Watch video highlights from the Assembly on our [YouTube](#) channel.
- Read our daily e-newsletters and updates to keep informed about events happening at the Assembly.

